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HOUSEKEEPERS' CHAT Thursday, January 14, 1937

(FOR BROADCAST USE ONLY)

Subject: "WHO EATS AMERICA'S CITRUS FRUIT." Information from the Consumers' Counsel, Agricultural Adjustment Administration, United States Department of Agriculture.

--ooOoo--

The Consumers' Counsel of the Agricultural Adjustment Administration last spring conducted a survey in two American cities to find out who eats citrus fruit and how much they eat.

Did I hear someone say "So what"?

Doubtless I did. But let me ask our idiomatic inquirers to hold their horses. I have a statement here from Don Montgomery, the head of the Triple-A Consumers' Counsel division which explains why the survey was made, what it revealed, and what moral may be drawn from the findings.

I'll give you this statement, and then if you still want to ask "So what"? --- why, I guess you'll just have to ask it. At any rate, here's what Consumers' Counsel Montgomery deposes and says:

"We're getting large citrus fruit crops this year. The Florida crop of oranges is the largest on record for that State, and the crop of grapefruit from Florida, Texas, and the West, is 30 per cent larger than in the previous record year, 1934. The tangerine crop is the largest on record, too. The California orange crop is not a record breaker, but promises to be above average, especially that part of it which will come to market next summer. California's lemon crop is also large, the second largest on record.

"Not only is this year's crop large; It seems that crops in years to come will be larger than in years past. The number of citrus trees bearing fruit is increasing each year, as the new groves planted in the 1920's and 1930's come into bearing.

"Naturally, we ought to know what people consume now as the first step in devising ways and means to keep future consumption in step with future production. So we set out to learn how much typical people buy of fresh oranges and grapefruit, of six canned fruit products, including citrus and competing fruits, and of dairy orange beverage.

"That's the why of the survey. Here's the how: We secured the help of WPA workers in two typical American cities -- Baltimore and St. Louis. These workers gathered facts from 1,000 typical families in each city about how much of these products each family used, and in what forms they used them.

"Now the tabulators have compiled the information about consumption of fresh oranges and grapefruit by typical families in these typical cities. The tabulations aren't complete for the other products.

"Here are some of the facts reported by the heads of 2,000 households:

"All but 32 of the 2,000 families had used fresh oranges or grapefruit at some time.

"Families with larger incomes used more fresh citrus fruit than families with smaller incomes. This tendency was more pronounced in the consumption of oranges than in the consumption of grapefruit.

"The families in which the weekly income divided up to less than 2 dollars per person ate on the average about 2 and one-half oranges per person per week. When the family income per person was between 2 dollars and 4 dollars per week, the average consumption of oranges per person went up 3 per week. And so on up to the families whose incomes averaged $10 or more per week per person. These higher income families ate almost half a dozen oranges per person per week, on the average.

"That indicates the effect of income upon consumption of citrus fruit. Another point we wanted to find out about was how regularly people eat oranges and grapefruit. The vast majority of families reported they were regular citrus eaters. In Baltimore about 850 families out of the thousand reporting used oranges regularly, and in St. Louis almost as many. But grapefruit wasn't used so regularly. A few over a half of the Baltimore families and almost half of the St. Louis families reported that they were regular grapefruit consumers.

"Still another thing we inquired about was how consumers used these fruits. Most any one can guess what was the most popular way of eating oranges ----- Yes, you're right -- it was drinking them -- as juice for breakfast. That was true for families in both Baltimore and St. Louis. In Baltimore the second most popular way of using oranges was for eating between meals. The third use was eating them instead of drinking them for breakfast. In St. Louis eating oranges for breakfast was second, and eating them between meals third. There were many other uses reported -- feeding the juice to children and babies, putting the oranges in packed lunches to eat away from home, and feeding to the ill persons in the household.

"As for grapefruit, the most popular use by far was for eating out of the skin as a breakfast fruit. Families in both cities found another use for grapefruit -- drinking the juice for breakfast.

"Well, our analysis of the facts we gathered isn't complete. But so far as it is complete, it is significant because it shows that a considerable number of families do not use these fruit, or use them only irregularly.

"Connected with that is the fact that the per capita income of a family has a lot to do with how much citrus fruit its members consume. This shows how important it is to move citrus from the grower to the consumer at

the lowest possible expense so that more consumers can get the nutritive values in which citrus is high, and so that growers can get a reasonable return when they are producing large crops as they are this year. That becomes all the more important in view of the fact that the big crop this year is perhaps only a forerunner of a continued large supply. The bearing acreage of these trees is increasing rapidly. So I say the problem before all of us -- both consumers and producers -- is how to get the benefit of this valuable food supply and how to pay growers for producing it."

And that concludes the statement from Don Montgomery, Consumers' Counsel of the Agricultural Adjustment Administration, reporting some results of the survey of fruit consumption by typical families in typical cities.

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